WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated nucleic acid of any one of (a) to (d) below:

(a) a nucleic acid encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:2, 4, 6 and 8,

(b) a nucleic acid comprising a coding region in the nucleotide sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5 or 7,

(c) a nucleic acid encoding a protein that comprises the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:2, 4, 6 and 8, in which one or more amino acids are replaced, deleted, inserted and/or added and that is functionally equivalent to the protein comprising the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:2, 4, 6 and 8, and

(d) a nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions with the nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5 or 7, and that encodes a protein functionally equivalent to the protein comprising the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:2, 4, 6 or 8.

2. An isolated nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:2, 4, 6 and 8 or a fragment thereof.

3. A vector into which the nucleic acid of claim 1 is inserted.

4. A vector into which the nucleic acid of claim 2 is inserted.

5. A transformant harboring the nucleic acid of claim 1.

6. A transformant harboring the nucleic acid of claim 2.

7. A transformant harboring the vector of claim 3.

8. A transformant harboring the vector of claim 4.

9. A substantially purified polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 1.

10. A substantially purified polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 2.

11. A method for producing a polypeptide, the method comprising the steps of culturing the transformant of claim 3 and recovering a polypeptide expressed from the transformant or the culture supernatant thereof.

12. A method for producing a polypeptide, the method comprising the steps of culturing the transformant of claim 4 and recovering a polypeptide expressed from the transformant or the culture supernatant thereof.

13. An antibody against the polypeptide of claim 9.

14. An antibody against the polypeptide of claim 10.

15. A polynucleotide that hybridizes with the nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5 and 7 or the complementary strand thereof and that comprises at least 15 nucleotides.

16. A method for screening a compound binding to the polypeptide of claim 9, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting a test sample with the polypeptide or a partial peptide thereof,

(b) detecting a binding activity of the test sample to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof, and

(c) selecting a compound comprising the binding activity to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof.

17. A method for screening a compound binding to the polypeptide of claim 10, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting a test sample with the polypeptide or a partial peptide thereof,

(b) detecting a binding activity of the test sample to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof, and

(c) selecting a compound comprising the binding activity to the polypeptide or the partial peptide thereof.

18. A compound isolated by the method of claim 16.

19. A compound isolated by the method of claim 17.

20. A method for screening a compound that suppresses or promotes expression of the nucleic acid of claim l, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) contacting a test sample with cells expressing the nucleic acid,

(b) detecting the expression of the nucleic acid in the cells, and

(c) selecting a compound that decreases or increases the expression of the nucleic acid compared with that in the case where the test sample is not contacted with the cells.

21. A method for screening a compound that suppresses or promotes expression of the nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) providing cells into which a vector comprising a reporter gene functionally linked downstream of an expression control region of the nucleic acid of claim 1,

(b) contacting a test sample with the cells,

(c) detecting the activity of the reporter gene in the cells, and

(d) selecting a compound that decreases or increases the activity compared with that in the case where the test sample is not contacted with the cells.

22. A compound isolated by the method of claim 20.

23. A compound isolated by the method of claim 21.